

We claim:

1. A method for prioritizing information within a network comprising the steps:

receiving at least one set of information within a network;

5 associating at least one priority value with the at least one set of information; and

transmitting the at least one set of information across the network at least partially based on the priority value.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one priority value is at least partially based on one or more values of a set of priority parameter types, the set of priority parameter types comprising:

5 a connection identification;

a user identification;

a content identification;

a session identification;

a content type;

10 a website identification;

a domain content element type; and

a type of connection.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein a network device selectively determines a priority value at least partially based on a value associated with:

a connection identification priority parameter;

5 a user identification priority parameter;

a content identification priority parameter;

a session identification priority parameter;

a domain content type priority parameter;

a website identification priority parameter;

10 a content element type priority parameter; and

a type of connection priority parameter.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one set of information within a network comprises at least one packet.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one set of information within a network comprises at least one connection between a client and a web server.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the network comprises:

at least one intermediary server between at least one client and at least one originating server, wherein
5 the intermediary server is responsible for determining at least one priority value for the set of information.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one intermediary server receives a set of priority information via an out-of-band control system.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the network comprises:

at least one front-end server computer operatively connected to at least one client;
5 at least one back-end server computer operatively connected to at least one server and to the at least one front-end server computer, wherein the connection to the front-end server computer is implemented over a heterogeneous network.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the at least one front-end server computer is responsible for determining at least one priority value for the at least one set of information transmitted to a back-end server.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the at least one back-end server computer is responsible for determining

at least one priority value for the at least one set of information transmitted to a front-end.

11. The method of claim 8, additionally comprising using an out-of-band management system to translate a priority parameter associated with the at least one set of information into a priority value associated with the
5 at least one set of information.

12. The method claim 11, wherein the out-of-band management system provides a set of priority information to the at least one front-end server computer and the at least one back-end server computer via an out-of-band
5 management system.

13. A method of transmitting requests from a client to a request-specified origin server comprising the acts of:

5 sending one or more requests from one or more client computers, the requests designating an origin server;
determining for each request whether a priority parameter is associated with the request;
converting the priority parameter to a first priority value; and
10 transmitting the requests to the origin server in an order based upon the priority values.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the priority parameter is included with the request.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein the priority parameter is determined by performing a lookup in a table.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein the priority parameter is obtained from the origin server.

17. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of sending comprises sending the request with an associated domain-specific user priority parameter.

18. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of sending comprises sending the request with an associated content priority parameter.

19. The method of claim 13 further comprising:
generating a response to the request using the origin server;

5 marking the generated response with priority information;

converting the priority information to a second priority value; and

transmitting the response to the requesting client computers according to the second priority value.

20. A method of transmitting messages from a source computer to a response-specified destination computer comprising the acts of:

5 sending a plurality of messages, wherein each message specifies a destination computer;

determining for each message whether the message is associated with a priority parameter;

converting each priority parameters to a first priority value; and

10 transmitting the messages to the specified destination computers in an order based upon the priority values.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the step of sending comprises sending the messages with an associated domain-specific user priority parameter.

22. The method of claim 20 wherein the step of sending comprises sending the messages with an associated content priority parameter.

23. The method of claim 20 wherein the step of determining comprises obtaining the priority parameter from the source computer.

24. A system for prioritizing information within a network comprising:

one or more source computers, each source computer generating a message specifying a network-connected destination computer within a first domain;

priority information associated with each message;

an intermediary server within a second domain receiving the messages and the priority information associated with the message; and

means within the intermediary server, source computers and destination computers for exchanging at least some of the priority information as parameters appended to requests.

25. A method of monitoring use of network server resources comprising:

associating a priority value with each of a plurality of resources that are accessible through the network server; and

for each user requesting the resources, tracking the priority values associated with individual resources requested by the user.

26. The method of claim 25 further comprising:

determining a composite priority value for each user wherein the composite priority value based at least partially upon the priority values of each of the resources that are requested.

27. A method of monitoring use of network server
15 resources comprising:

providing a first plurality of secure resources and
a second plurality of unsecure resources on the network
server; and

for each user requesting the resources, tracking the
20 whether the requested resources are secure or unsecure;
and

determining a composite priority value for each user
wherein the composite priority value based at least
partially upon the number of resources that are requested
25 that are secure and unsecure.